

Behind

Closet

Doors

Gay Perspectives In Substance Misuse

Glyn Davies
Clinical Substance Misuse
Team Leader
HMP/YOI Brinsford / HMP Featherstone

Background

15+ years involved in substance misuse intervention in a variety of settings

- 20+ years involved in psychiatry.
- Last 4+ years in prisons.
- 3rd Conference attendance – Virgin presenter.

Why I'm Here Today.

- Most minority groups appear to have representation and a voice in substance misuse management.
- Literature has separate sections 'dedicated' to these issues.
- Little serious academic research appears to have been completed in this area – focus tends to be on heterosexual population and issues related to their 'issues'. Unless public health related.
- 12 months digging has revealed little addressing issues specifically related to substance use amongst Gay Men.

- Literature supplied for RCGP certificate has no section dealing with this area.
- Most literature ties in Gay perspectives within the public health agenda.
- Substance misuse on the 'Club' scene has been evident for years.
- More individuals are using cocktails of drugs at home for 'Play'.
- Crystal Methamphetamine is becoming a more common part of the cocktail of drugs used.

Issues Encountered

- Lack of interest from Gay press to look at or highlight this issue. Majority wanted advertising revenue to even mention someone was looking into this issue.
- Gay chat sites offered no support – claiming only to become involved in things organised by NHS. Commercial profile was an option.
- Thankfully users of these sites were more free with their time and opinions.

Information Obtained

- Complex patterns of substance misuse amongst gay men.
- Substance misuse isn't only restricted to recreational use.
- Large numbers of gay men are using cocktails of drugs at home to 'play'.
- Also having to use other drugs / alcohol to manage the 'come down'.
- Some particular issues related to the type of 'play'.

What Needs to be done.

- Similar efforts need to be focused on Gay men and their needs relating to substance misuse as is given to other minority groups.
- Appropriate research needs to be undertaken into patterns of drug use within this group. (Surveying gym users doesn't give you an overview of the average gay male)
- Services should look at needs and provision of services for Gay men.